

VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR NON-PUBLIC PRESCHOOLS AND KINDERGARTENS

Purpose:

To provide a voluntary process for certification of the educational program of a non-public preschool or kindergarten center as a school meeting the standards established by the Kentucky Board of Education pursuant to KRS 156.160(3).

Rationale:

There is a significant number of educational programs in Kentucky that provide only preschool and/or kindergarten programs and do not extend into the elementary grades. These programs include Head Start (when not associated with a public school), university lab early childhood programs, and many private and church-affiliated preschools and kindergartens. These programs are generally licensed for safety purposes by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, but the child care license is based on minimal requirements related to teaching staff credentials and curriculum.

Teachers in these non-public preschools and kindergartens do not have the professional benefits associated with teaching in recognized public and non-public schools. These benefits include recognition of years of teaching experience, college loan exemptions for teachers, as well as the opportunity to complete an internship for Kentucky teacher certification in these non-public school sites.

Process:

1. The non-public preschool or kindergarten voluntarily completes a national or regional educational accreditation process that addresses educational curriculum and materials appropriate for young children. The Kentucky Board of Education recognizes the following accrediting organizations for preschool and kindergarten programs:

Accreditation Agencies for Non-Public Preschools and Kindergartens

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

1509 16th St. NW

Washington, DC 20036

(202) 328-2601 or (800) 424-2460

www.naeyc.org

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
17 Dickey Hall
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0017
(859) 257-4256
E-mail - tejone2@uky.edu
www.sacs.org

Association of Montessori International/USA
410 Alexander Street
Rochester, New York 14607-1028
(585) 461-5920 or (800) 872-2643
FAX (585) 461-0075
E-mail – ami-usa@montessori-ami.org
www.montessori-ami.org/3amiusa/3aamiusa.htm

American Montessori Society
281 Park Avenue South, 6th floor
New York, New York 10010
(212) 358-1250
FAX (212) 358-1256
www.amshq.org/indexmain.html

2. The non-public preschool or kindergarten voluntarily submits the following items to the Kentucky Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Development, 17th Floor CPT, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601:

(A) A copy of the documentation of current accreditation by the regional or national organization; and

(B) Documentation of teacher credentials:

1. For Kindergarten Teachers: Copies of appropriate Kentucky teaching certificates; or

2. For Preschool Teachers: Credentials meeting 704 KAR 3:410 Preschool Education Program for Four-Year-Old Children. Note: Copies of the appropriate teaching certificates, Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE) or letter of exemption issued from 1998 through 2002.

*Note: Programs that serve blended age groups within a single setting or classroom, must meet one or both criteria for certification (example: blended four- and five-year-old classrooms would require a staff member or members with appropriate certification).

3. The Division of Early Childhood Development reviews the documentation to justify the issuance of a Statement of Recognition of the school's compliance with curriculum, textbook (or instructional materials), and teacher certification standards.

4. The Division of Early Childhood Development submits the documentation to the Division of Federal Programs and Instructional Equity for submission to the Kentucky Board of Education. The Kentucky Board of Education is responsible for approval or rejection.

5. For programs that are currently undergoing self-study in preparation for regional or national accreditation, the program may request a one-year interim approval, which may be extended only once. The one-year interim approval will be based on documentation that the program:

A. is actively engaged in a self-study process for regional or national accreditation, with a timeline for applying for accreditation;

B. meets the Kentucky teacher credential requirements above; and

C. has classrooms which score at least an average of 6.0 across the entire scale of the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised* as validated by an independent evaluator approved by the Kentucky Department of Education for these purposes. All arrangements and costs for the onsite visit by the independent validator shall be the responsibility of the local non-public school program.